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## Noticing and Allowing

(The following is an excerpt from the spiritual book, *Nothing Personal, Seeing Beyond the Illusion of a Separate Self* by Nirmala. You can download a PDF of the entire book for free by signing up for our monthly [newsletter here](#).)

There are two simple instructions, or invitations, in [satsang](#). The first is to notice your experience: Really notice what's happening right now. The second is to know that it's the right experience. Whatever you notice, whatever you find, that's the right experience. You thought you had to fix it or improve it, but it turns out that whatever you are experiencing right now is the right experience. A friend of mine has a friend who answers every question about how things are going with "Right on schedule!"

You don't have to wait to do these steps. You can start right now. Notice your experience—what's happening? Bring your awareness, your attention, your curiosity to bear on your experience right now. Secondly, just allow that experience to be the way it is. Stop the endless effort to try to change it, to make it better or different or more or less. Just let it be the way it is.

To the extent that you're doing those two things, there will be an absence of suffering. And, of course, the opposite is true: You will suffer to whatever extent your attention and curiosity are focused on what is not or to whatever extent you are trying to fix, change, resist, or avoid this moment.

Actually you can't do either of these completely unless you're doing the other, so these two instructions are really only one. You can't fully notice your experience if you're already trying to change it or get rid of it. And you can't fully allow and embrace your experience if you're not paying attention to it.

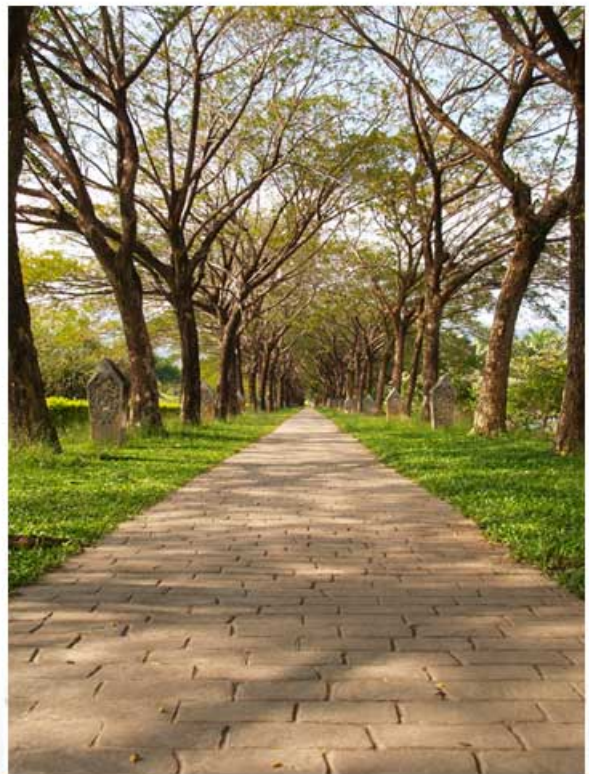
One thing that's not required is seeking the right experience. The instructions are not to notice a particular experience or to notice an experience you've heard about or read about or once had that you want to have again. It's simply to notice the experience that you're having right now. There's no need to seek or search for a better experience than the one you're having.

If, however, in this moment, you are desperately trying to get a better experience or resisting the one you're having or paying attention to some idea about how things should be instead of how they are, then that's your experience. You don't even have to go to battle with that. Just notice what that's like.

What is it like when you're lost in a juicy fantasy about how great life will be if only this or that would happen? Or a juicy fear about how terrible life will be if this or that happens? The invitation is to notice what that's like rather than resisting that fantasy. Just notice what it's like to fantasize. Include the experience of being lost in longing and searching and fantasizing as well as the content of your fantasy. What is the experience of being lost in an idea? The point isn't to stop having ideas, which isn't even possible, but to simply notice what that's like. When you stop and notice, you find a lot of fantasizing going on. Most of us have an ongoing mental commentary going on about how our lives could be better or worse. What's that like when your attention is involved with these ideas?

We're always noticing something. I challenge you to not pay attention to anything for the next ten seconds. You can't do it. Noticing just happens. It turns out that these two simple steps are qualities of your Being, not something extra you have to do. Noticing is always happening, even if all we're noticing is the content of an idea. The invitation is to let that noticing take in more—take in the actual experience moment to moment. It may seem like a doing at first, but in the doing of it, it's more like you're being done, like you're being noticed along with everything else.

The same is true with allowing your experience: It is also natural to your Being. Right in this moment, your predominant experience is allowing. In this moment, the vast majority of what's happening in this room is okay with you. You're allowing the walls of this room to be



the way they are. You're allowing the furniture to be the way it is. You're allowing your breath to breathe the way it is. In fact, you can reject only one aspect of your experience at a time; the rest is naturally allowed. You can only resist one thing at a time.

These two simple instructions are not something you need to do. The point in speaking about them is to get you to notice that noticing and allowing are already happening. This space of allowing is already present. It's so present that it even allows us to be in battle with what is. That's something you can get curious about. How much am I allowing what is and how much am I struggling against what is? What is it like if you just allow yourself even to not allow?

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